

## Conference Paper

# The Influence of L1 and L2 in English Stress Shift Production of the EFL Learners in Indonesia

**Dhinar Arienintya**

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

### Abstract

EFL learners in Indonesia are varied in terms of their age, gender, and origin (places to live). They eagerly learn English productively by speaking although, most of the time, most of them mispronounce some words. Even worse, they still mispronounce a word after having given or heard the correct pronunciation. If this happens to learners whose major is not English, it is perhaps not a big problem; however, it should be a problem that should be immediately fixed by the lecturers if it happens to learners whose major is English. Many of the learners of English Language Teaching still frequently make mistakes in pronouncing English words, especially in giving stress in each word. It may happen due to the influence of their L1 and L2, the lack of knowledge in giving stress, or both. The participants of this study will be the freshmen of English Language Teaching of the Department of English Language and Literature of Universitas Negeri Malang attending Basic Reading Class. The design of this research is descriptive in which questionnaire and recording will be used as the instruments in the data collection. The result of this study is expected to answer whether or not L1 and L2 influence English stress shift production of the EFL learners in Indonesia.

Corresponding Author:  
 Dhinar Arienintya; email:  
 dhinararient1@gmail.com

Received: 1 March 2017  
 Accepted: 27 March 2017  
 Published: 12 April 2017

**Publishing services provided  
 by Knowledge E**

**Keywords:** Stress shifts, pronunciation, EFL learners in Indonesia

© Dhinar Arienintya. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the LSCAC Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

Teaching speaking seems always be an important productive skill to be taught in English classes, either in English Department or in other non-English Departments. It is due to its goal that is to make people able to communicate or share or deliver or express their opinions directly through spoken form. However, there are only few English teachers or lecturers or even researchers think pronunciation, stress, or intonation less important to be taught to the students. In ([4]: 38) stated that pronunciation has been something of an orphan in English programs around the world. It means that the teaching of pronunciation is a bit left behind if we compare it with the teaching of any other language components such as grammar or vocabulary. Especially in Indonesian context, pronunciation seems to have a little concern to be taught in any levels of education, possibly except in some higher level of education especially English Department.

 **OPEN ACCESS**

In fact, since pronunciation also plays important role in communication, its importance should be as same as the teaching speaking itself. In ([4]: 39) argued that pronunciation links to the speech clarity and listening comprehension. This is because if someone makes wrong pronunciation or wrong stress on an English word, the same English second or foreign language speakers perhaps still understand him, but the native speakers will have different perception. They might not understand of what he says if he does not produce the correct pronunciation. In extreme way, it can be stated that there will be a communication breaks down only because of the stress shifts made by the non-native speakers of English. This is in line with some other researches saying that mispronunciation affected comprehensibility since it could make misinterpretation between interlocutors (Schairer (1992) and Gynan (1985a) in [1]).

Only few teachers or lecturers teach pronunciation, particularly word stress, due to many reasons. The fewer existence of researches or information about teaching pronunciation, particularly word stress, rather than researches in speaking focusing on the teaching strategies/techniques used in speaking class or assessment/evaluation applied in speaking can also be one factor affecting the teaching pronunciation, especially in Indonesia. This is also supported by ([5]: 5) stating that the issue of assessment is mostly focused on the content, teaching strategies, and materials, but not on the pronunciation.

In Indonesia, there is at least one research on pronunciation, particularly word stress conducted by [8]. He wrote his article with the intention of identifying what stress shifts made by the students and what the frequent stress shifts made by students were (in what syllabic word the students made the most mistress shift). The subjects of his research were the first semester students of English Department of State University of Makassar attending English Phonology class in 2010. In his research, he specified his research on identifying the stress position for the 3 to 7 syllable words. Despite the result of his research that was not really convincing since he only asked the students' to mark (') some words while he wanted to know the stress shifts made by the students, his research on this topic is worthwhile since there is still few research on pronunciation.

By knowing this fact, there are possibly a lot of chances to conduct a similar research or another research on pronunciation as it is suggested by ([8]: 31) such as identifying problems in stress shifts. Thus, in this study, the researcher conducted a mini research on the influence of L1 and L2 in English stress shift production of the EFL learners in Indonesia.

## 2. Method

A descriptive qualitative research design was used in this mini empirical research to make sure whether the L1 and L2 of Indonesian EFL learners influence the English stress shift production.

The participants of this study were 33 students of Monday–Wednesday Basic Reading class academic year 2015/2016 who were asked to fill a set of online questionnaire and to be recorded by using a recorder, 22 females and 8 males. In addition, the teaching activity of the class includes the reading a loud in order to check the students' pronunciation, stressing of the words, and intonation.

The instruments used in this research are a set of questionnaire, a recorder, and an adapted (shorten) reading text. A set of questionnaire was developed consisted of three parts, identity, English background, and English pronunciation problem. The questionnaire was sent through the participants' emails; however, there were only 30 out of 33 participants completing and sending back the questionnaire.

The adapted (shorten) 365–word text given to the participants to be read aloud is taken from the textbook used in the Basic reading class.

To ensure that the participants face any problems in pronunciation, the researcher recorded their pronunciation shift. The participants, one by one, were asked to read aloud the given text, while the researcher recorded them. However, there were only 26 out of 33 participants taking part in this recording part due to the absence of 6 participants during the two–day of recording.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Participants' Identity and their English Background

Looking at the results of the questionnaire, it can be said that the position of English is as one of foreign countries that the participants learn. In their daily life, many of the participants tend to speak in their local languages. There are 20 participants (66.7%) speak local languages as their L1 in which most of them are Javanese, while the other 10 participants (33.3%) having Indonesian as their L1. Indonesian local languages are many and varied in their accents and dialects in every different region. This makes the 20 participants who speak on their local languages have distinctive way of speaking in Indonesia or English in term of their accents and dialects that are hard to change in a second.

The participants, based on the questionnaire results, have never gone or lived in any of English speaking countries. It could be another factor related to the lack exposure (references) of native English speakers pronouncing words clearly. Teoh (2011 in Essays

2013) stated that the students' English level are not as good as the previous days since they tend to use their local language instead of English in their daily life.

Having good receptive language skill is not enough since if a person learns a new language, he should also be able to produce the language, either through written or spoken form. It is aimed to measure how far his receptive skill goes. It is in line with [7] who said speaking is the most frequent skill to be used. In addition to that, in productive skill, namely writing and speaking, there are many language aspects included in such as in speaking, there are fluency, lexical, grammatical, and pronunciation; while in pronunciation, one of the aspect is the stress shift in which can cause problems for the native speakers when a non-native speaker misplaces the stress. Schairer (1992, in [1]) said that mispronunciation changes the meaning of a message being delivered.

English Department students, especially those who have graduated and want to be English teachers, lecturers, or any English instructors, should have better pronunciation, stress shift, and intonation in producing words or sounds clearly and smoothly. It does not mean that they have to be a native like, such as imitating and producing the same accent as the natives, because it is considered less possible because the students do not study within the immersion atmosphere, or with more English native speakers. Otherwise, EFL learners in Indonesia are taught by more natives of Indonesia who have graduated from English Department who, in the daily life, still sometimes speak Bahasa Indonesia and when they speak English, they sometimes speak within their L1 and L2 accent, dialect, and inappropriate stress shift. In [6] nonnative language learners who experience better exposure to close native pronunciation will have better pronunciation closer to native than those who do not. English teachers, since they are the direct role model in the classroom whom students imitate anything they perform in this case pronunciation, should be able to place the correct stress on each English word. The future students will keep pronouncing an English word incorrectly and/or misplacing the stress unless, the teachers give the right way of pronouncing a word.

There are only 4 participants (13.3%) speaking English every day, while others do not. Though the 4 participants say that every day they speak English, it does not mean the whole day they speak 100% English, but mixing it with any other languages they use, either their L1 or L2. There are 29 participants (96.7%) saying that their surrounding helps and motivates them to speak fluently and appropriately. Even more, 27 participants (90%) say that their surrounding also gives feedback by giving correction if they make mistakes in choosing or pronouncing the correct words. This is a good atmosphere to improve the participants' English performance, especially in speaking within appropriate pronunciation and stress shift, since it could make the participants aware of their mispronunciation and so later they are expected to be able to produce and use the correct pronunciation that they are not fossilized by the incorrect pronunciation.

### 3.2. English Pronunciation Problem and the Influence of Participants' L1 and L2

Based on the result of the questionnaire, the participants' pronunciation is questionable. This can be proved by the results about how often the participants make mispronunciation; there are only 4 participants (13.3%) who rarely make mistakes in their pronunciation. In addition to that, the next question asking how often the participants pronounce English words the same way as pronouncing their L1 and L2 words, there are only 3 of them (10%) who never pronounce the words the same way as the L1/L2. This results show that the participants' pronunciation is not good and urgently needs to be improved. By looking at their answers about their ability in pronunciation that is not good, it can be stated that their stress shift of each word is also less proper.

Next, the answers for questions about whether they know if there are rules in English pronunciation and whether they know that different syllabic words have different syllable stress, are quite surprising if they are compared to the participants' previous perspective of their ability in pronunciation; all participants do not know that there are rules in English pronunciation. In line with it, there are 28 participants (93.3%) who do not know that the different syllabic words have different way of pronouncing them and different syllable stress. These answers are in line with the results that 7 participants (23.3%) and 18 of them (60%) often and sometimes pronounce and put the stress of those different syllabic words the same way.

This result is supported by the next questions about the easiness of pronouncing different syllabic words. There are 24 participants (80%) and 18 participants (60%) answering that the 2-syllable and 3-syllable words are easy to be pronounced; while 22 participants (73.3%) and 28 participants (80%) answering that the 4-syllable and more than 4-syllable words are not easy to be pronounced. The result of the questionnaire about the participants' difficulty in pronouncing (placing the stress) of the different syllabic words are supported by the results of the recording. Based on the results of the recording, the average score of correct pronunciation (stress shift) for the 2-syllable words is 30.9 out of 43 words; for 3-syllable words, the average is 11.07 out of 19 words; for 4-syllable words, the average score is 1.83 out of 7 words; while the average score for more than 4-syllable words is 0.39 out of 2 words.

There are 19 participants (63.3%) and 8 participants (26.7%) mentioning their teachers/lectures always and sometimes correct their mispronunciation as well as the misplacing the stress shift. It is contrast to the fact that 27 participants (90%) actually understand that making some mispronunciation and misplacing the stress shift may lead to miscommunication.

Seeing the results of the participants' pronunciation based on both the questionnaire and recording results, the absence of knowing the rules of pronunciation and

stressing can be because of some reasons such as the participants are still freshmen of the Department of English Language and Literature and have not got a chance to experience the English life in any of English speaking countries yet.

Nevertheless, if we refer back to the length of time that the participants have had in learning English, approximately 12 years is such a long time that they should have been able to pronounce each word correctly within good pronunciation as well as the stress shift. Then, the participants' L1 and L2 could also be taken into account in this case. There are 25 out of 5 participants agree that their L1 and L2 influence the way they pronounce English words. In [2] stated that among other factors affecting pronunciation, native language can be the most influential one. Native language here means the L1 and or L2 of the learners. If the learner has a "thick" L1 or L2 within their local accents, this will affect the learner's second language/foreign language pronunciation, but in this case is the foreign language since English are used as a foreign language in Indonesian context.

In responding the rank of mispronunciation causes, especially stress shifts, there are 13 of participants (43.3%) state that was due to fossilization. The participants' pronunciation fossilization can be due to the previous instructors or surrounding who kept them pronouncing the wrong way and the lack of correct pronunciation treatment/drilling done by the previous English instructors. There are 10 of them (33.3%) state that was due to the different rules from those of their L1 and L2. Since the participants are still in the first year of studying in this department, the knowledge that they have about different way of pronunciation and word stress shift is mostly given by their lecturers in the form of direct correction, while the exact rules of pronunciation underneath the Phonology subject are usually scheduled to be taken by the sophomores or juniors. Fortunately, despite the less capability of producing appropriate pronunciation and stress shift, none of the participants said they do not need any improvement in their pronunciation.

#### 4. Conclusions and Suggestions

In conclusion, pronunciation including the stress shift is actually as important as the message that is trying to be delivered. However, the difficulty of English pronunciation, which involves the stress shift, happened on the EFL learners of Indonesia is not only caused by the absence of knowing the existing rules of pronunciation for the 2-syllable word, the 3-syllable word, the 4-syllable words, or more than 4-syllable words, but it also caused by the L1 and L2 of the learners. The inexistence of special stress shifts in the learners' L1 and L2 also makes them difficult in learning and applying the appropriate stress shift in the learners' pronunciation.

## References

- [1] C. Agostinelli, Agostinelli, C. (2012). Native speaker perceptions of spoken L2 Spanish: The role of pronunciation and implications for pedagogy. In. J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). Proceedings of the 3rd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference, Sept. 2011, (Online), (pp. 147-153), (<http://jlevis.public.iastate.edu/Proceedingsfrom3rdPSLLT%20updated.pdf>).
- [2] M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton, and J. Goodwin, Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English speakers of other languages, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996.
- [3] Essays UK. (November 2013). The lack of exposure and practice community English language essay, (Online), (<https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-language/the-lack-of-exposure-and-practice-community-english-language-essay.php?cref=1>).
- [4] J. B. Gilbert, (1994). Intonation: A navigation for the listener. In Joan Morley (Ed.). Pronunciation Pedagogy and Theory (pg 36-48), (Part 3). Bloomington: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Inc.
- [5] J. Goodwin, D. Brinton, and M. Celce-Murcia, "Pronunciation assessment in the ESL/EFL Curriculum," in Pronunciation Pedagogy and Theory (pg 316), (Part 1), Joan. Morley, Ed., Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Bloomington, 1994.
- [6] E. Schoonmaker-Gates, (2012). Foreign accent perception in L2 Spanish: the role of proficiency and L2 experience. In. J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). Proceedings of the 3rd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference, Sept. 2011, (Online), (pp. 84-92), (<http://jlevis.public.iastate.edu/Proceedingsfrom3rdPSLLT%20updated.pdf>).
- [7] S. Torky, The effectiveness of a task-based instruction program in developing the English language speaking skills of secondary stage students. Thesis, Ain Shams University, Cairo, 2006, (Online), (<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED523922.pdf>).
- [8] W. Sukardi, "Stress shifts of English utterances made by Indonesian speakers of English (ISE). International Journal of English Linguistics," vol. 2, pp. 23-32, 2012.